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him in a dungeon. The fifth Act is short, but contains quite enough of incident to sustain the tragic interest of the piece. Guiscard is released by Syndarac; the Christians overthrow the Turks; Benteleb, though foiled, seizes a moment in which he effects the murder of Osmyn, who dies repentant in the arms of his wife and son.

From the passages we have quoted, our readers will perceive that the poetry is characterized by all the peculiarities of Maturin's genius. Both on the stage and in the closet Osmyn will add to the reputation of the author, and its production on our national boards is highly creditable to all parties concerned. Maturin and Knowles, both Irishmen, have produced the most successful modern tragedies. Both are entitled to a high place in the list of dramatic authors—opposite in style, but kindred in genius. The writing of Knowles is distinguished by strength and simplicity—that of Maturin, by gorgeous ornament and splendid figures. Knowles was more fortunate in his selection of subjects: Virginius and William Tell, are hallowed in our memories by long and fond associations. The story of each strikes home to every heart; the incidents belong to the situations, and every one can feel their truth and probability. The more romantic imagination of Maturin searches among the dark and stormy recesses of the human soul, and produces scenes of guilt and agony, and characters of terrible passion and energy, more powerful and appalling, but less natural and affecting. They command, perhaps, our admiration, rather than our sympathy—our wonder, rather than our tears.

1. *Constable's Miscellany*, Vol. LII. History of Music. By W. C. Stafford.—2. Vol. LIII. *Life of Sir William Wallace, of Elderslie*. By J. D. Carrick, 2 vols. Vol. 1.—Edinburgh, Constable & Co. and Hurst, Chance, and Co. London.

THE History of Music, though by no means one of the most interesting volumes of Constable's Miscellany, is yet not devoid of pleasant light information, as well as anecdote: the author, in his preface, disclaims all intention of treating the subject scientifically, and sets out with a popular account of the origin of music; half his book is thus occupied by a dissertation upon ancient music, and the music of savage nations; now as we have no time or taste, at present, for the sackbut or psaltery, much less for Tom-Toms and split bamboos, we shall pass over the chapters upon Antediluvian music, as well as Oriental, African, American, Grecian, and Roman, and proceed at once to that part of the book which treats of modern Italian Minstrelsy. We hope to gratify our readers, by extracting for them part of the account our author gives of Rossini, of whose powers he seems to us to judge very fairly, as we shall have occasion to observe by and by:

"The glory of Italy in the nineteenth century, is undoubtedly Rossini, who was born in February, 1792, at Pesaro, a small town in the Papal states. We wish our limits would permit us to give a full biography of this composer; but we must confine ourselves to a few of the leading features in his professional progress. His father and mother belonged to one of those strolling companies of actors and musicians who frequent the fairs of Italy; and when accompanying them on their excursions, the young Giachimo gave the first proofs of

his abilities. He appears not to have commenced the study of music till he had attained the age of ten years, but his progress was so rapid, that before he was sixteen, he took his place at the piano as director of the orchestra, at Lugo, Ferrara, Senigaglia, and other small towns. He was also able to sing, at sight, any piece of music put before him. In 1808, he composed a symphony, and a cantata, his first vocal essay, called *Il Pianto d'Armonia*. The following year he is said to have written his first opera, *Demetrio e Polibio*, which was performed at Rome in 1812.

"For the carnival of 1813, he composed another farze, *Il figlio per Azzardo*; and his fine opera seria, *Tancredi*. One of his biographers says—"No adequate idea can be formed of the success which this delightful opera obtained at Venice. Suffice it to say, that the presence of Napoleon himself, who honoured the Venetians with a visit, was unable to call off their attention from Rossini. All was enthusiasm! *tutto furore*, to use the terms of that expressive language, which seems to have been created for the use of the arts. From the gondolier to the patrician, every body was repeating *Mi rivedrai, ti rivedro*," and in the very courts of law, the judges were compelled to impose silence upon the audience, who were ceaselessly humming this popular air.

"The beautiful and clever *cantatrice buffa*, Marcolino, was at this period at Venice.—There appears to have been one of those *liasons*, so common on the continent, between these parties, and Rossini composed for her the gay and animated part in *L'Italiana in Algeri*. This opera placed him in the first rank of modern composers. In the autumn of the same year, he composed *La Pietra del Paragone*, (the Touchstone,) which many consider as his best comic opera; it was supported by the talents of Marcolini, Galli, Bonoldi, and Parlamagni; and "obtained a success which was little short of extravagance." Rossini's remuneration for writing these operas was not great. He presided at the piano during the first three representations, and then received his 800 or 1000 francs. Of these receipts he sent two-thirds to his parents at Pesaro, (addressing the letters to his mother in the following style:—"All' Ornatissima Signora Rossini, Madre del celebre Maestro, in Bologna,") and with the remainder, he set off to amuse himself as fortune might dictate.—He was usually *fêted* in the towns which he visited; his agreeable manners, his talents, and celebrity, made him a welcome guest wherever he went; and he was as happy as a light heart and an unceasing flow of animal spirits could make him."

The following particulars relating to this great master's reception in Milan, are also interesting:

"After the Carnival, in the spring of 1817, he went to Milan, where his celebrated *La Gazza Ladra* was written, and performed.—The Milanese, angry with Rossini for leaving their city for Naples, went in crowds to the theatre, determined to cover the unfortunate composer with disgrace; and he, aware of the popular mood, took his place at the piano, with spirits considerably below par. Such were the merits of the opera, however, that they disarmed the rage of the Milanese, made them forget their mortified vanity, and caused them to hail the author with the most unbounded

applause. "*Bravo maestro!*" "*Viva Rossini!*" resounded on every side; and as the master, when thus called on, is obliged to make his obeisance to the audience, Rossini declared, that he was as much fatigued with this ceremony, as he was with the direction of the opera."

We ourselves have heard a story abroad, that Rossini, being disgusted with the Milanese for their caprice or want of taste, set to work and composed a Requiem for himself, saying, after having performed it, I am now dead to Milan for ever, and made a vow never again to enter that city.

Of his talents as a composer, we think the following a just estimate, "his beautiful and elegant melodies sink into the heart, they are capable of being understood, and felt by all—their brilliant vivacity makes them always agreeable, and though Rossini breathes few pathetic strains, and is inferior in emotion, in pathos, and in depicting the more stormy passions, as well as in originality, to many of his predecessors and contemporaries, he is the composer for the populace, the *Artiste* of those who follow music as a pastime, not as a passion, and who adopt it as an agreeable amusement, not as a profound science."

When speaking of German music, the author remarks on the great taste for harmony possessed by that nation, as highly characteristic of their style in composition, and observes with truth, that "if an Englishman hears a party of country girls singing in a vineyard, or a company of conscripts going to drill, he is sure to hear them singing in parts." This part of the work, however, rather disappointed us, for it most unaccountably passes over the names of the most celebrated modern composers, and we never hear one word of Spohr, Herz, Hummel, and others, whose works are much better known in Germany than those of M. Roser, of Vienna, of whom it gives a full account.

Of the musical talents of the Hungarians, our author entertains no very flattering opinion, nor do the Laplanders occupy a more exalted place in his estimation.

"The nomade Laplanders do not appear to have any notion of music. Their singing is a fearful yell; their songs consisting of five or six words repeated over and over; one that Dr. Clarke heard, consisted merely of the following words:—

"Let us drive the wolves!
Let us drive the wolves!
See they run!
The wolves run!"

And no wonder Acerbi used to observe, that, if the wolf be within hearing when they sing, he should be frightened away. When singing, they strain their lungs, so as to cause a kind of spasmodic convulsion of the chest, which produces a noise like the braying of an ass.—The airs of the Fins, specimens of which are given by Acerbi, are much more pleasing."

The latter part of the book, which is taken up with an account of all the actors and actresses that have sung on the English stage for the last half century, contains little more than mere newspaper detail, and is very deficient in interest and information.

We have left ourselves little room to speak of the life of Wallace. We fear the subject scarcely affords materials for two volumes of a generally interesting nature, nor do we think the present author likely to impart any great additional zest to it by the charms of his style, which is often both cumbrous and inaccurate.

The Miscellany in general has strong claims on public support for many reasons, and we are therefore the more anxious that the choice both of subjects, and of writers, should be carefully and judiciously made, that it may continue to reflect credit on its conductors. We should add, that this volume is embellished with a singularly beautiful sketch of Wallace's Oak, with the ruins of Tor castle in the background, engraved by Miller, after a painting by Nasmyth, as well as by a fac simile of the seal of Baliol, used by Wallace when regent of Scotland.

The Game of Life.—By Leitch Ritchie.—2 vols. post 8vo.—London, E. Bull.

WHOEVER has read 'Tales and Confessions,' by Leitch Ritchie, published about a year and half ago, must be aware that he is a writer of great energy and power. He often reminds one of Godwin, in his mode of eliciting the romantic out of common and seemingly vulgar occurrences; and of fascinating the reader, and forcing him to go on, page after page, with gasping breathless eagerness, though the interest excited is very often as painful as it is intense. Still one gets a *sensation*, and that is what we read fiction for now-a-days. The present story, the longest, we believe, that Mr. Ritchie has yet ventured upon, ends happily, and we like it all the better.

Mr. Vesper, an elderly gentleman, whose early life had been embittered by the profligacy of an only brother, and the consequent death of his broken-hearted father, an humble shopkeeper in a country town, in middle life enriched by this abandoned brother dying in India, and leaving the fortune he had accumulated, to be equally divided between his brother and a daughter, whom he had by the wife he deserted, when he fled from his country.—Notwithstanding the most diligent search, Mr. Vesper can learn no tidings of this child, and he lives a hum-drum sort of life in retirement, for a long time, until one evening, when defeated at backgammon, by the curate of the parish, he resolves to set forth from home, and play, as he terms it, a game of life. In his youth he had been jilted by a coquet, who afterwards married an officer. She is now a poor widow with an only son, living in a cottage in Wales. To her he pays his first visit. When he arrives, the son, William Clive, who had now reached the age of manhood, is just setting out to London, to seek his fortune, with ten pounds in his pocket.—Moreover, he is in love with a certain Helen Howard, an orphan girl, who earns a scanty livelihood, by keeping school in his native village. The old man proposes to himself the agreeable task of watching (unknown and unperceived,) over the fortunes of this youthful pair; and the 'Game of Life' opens with the career of William Clive, in Babylon of the nations.

It is in this part of the book that the great judgment, minute knowledge, and wonderful skill of the writer, are most powerfully developed. The manner in which the every-day occurrences and petty misery of a needy life in the great metropolis, are vividly pictured before the mind's eye of the reader, is very admirable. We regret that we cannot find room for more than a single extract; we shall take the place where, after repeated attempts to gain a livelihood, and as repeated failures, the

hero's mind gradually sinks under the pressure of want and disappointment, and he is reduced to the necessity of pawning his clothes:—

"His plans became like dreams, without substance or definite shape; his thoughts, one by one, were forgotten; his temper was capricious, his voice querulous; and the low fever which preyed upon his vitals, was soon mistaken for an indication of the want of that talent and energy, which, to a poor and friendless adventurer, are the very basis of hope. The people with whom he lodged became every day more remiss in their attention, as every day their prospects of ultimate remuneration seemed more remote. His meals were unsuitable and irregular; his apartment was neglected; and, at length, his pale and ghastly appearance induced his benevolent hosts to think of consulting—not the physician—but the overseers of the parish. At this period his door was opened, and, for the first time, one of his London associates made his appearance as a visitor.

"You are unwell," said Burnet, in his usual monotone.—"Yes, very unwell. I thought how it would be—few constitutions could stand the sort of life which must be led by a companion of Wigwam. In case of your death, you would like me, I suppose, to write to your mother? However, there is time enough to think of that; you will live, no doubt, as long as you can—I myself would do the same!"

"I live," replied the invalid, "not because I can, but because I must. What is there to attach me to life?"

"Very true; you are a lucky fellow.—Your mother has an income independent of your exertions; you have no wife—no children—yes, you are a lucky fellow, you can afford to die—but you will live for all that."

"I cannot live without food; food cannot be obtained except in exchange for money or labour; neither of these can I give—and therefore—"

"Rare syllogism! But I deny a part of the premises, and therefore hold the *igitur* to be, as we lawyers say, a *non sequitur*. Money is merely the representative of other property, and when the principal is present you may dispense with the *locum tenens*. That trunk for instance contains more clothes than you can carry on your back at one moment; above your mantel-piece there hangs a pair of pistols, for which till your case becomes more desperate you can have little use; and below these, a wretched daub—some atrocious caricature of a face which it would be libellous to call human—acts the foil to a frame not inelegant nor uncouth. These articles are neither money nor labour, and yet they will purchase both."

"The daub, Mr. Burnet," said the invalid, with some heat, "I would not part with for all your legal knowledge thrown into one bundle; and indeed if I may judge of the value of your other acquisitions by your taste in the fine arts, they would hardly be a fair equivalent for the bit of gold leaf which covers the frame of that drawing."

"Well, well," said Burnet, with a cold smile, "let us talk of the wardrobe."

"These trifles I have already thought of selling; but," and William added hesitatingly, "just suppose that I recover from this illness—the plight I should have to stalk about the world in would be rather an awkward one."

"You have not thought of selling them," replied Burnet calmly, "you are not such a fool. You have not meddled so long with the

little miseries of your neighbours to be ignorant that you may lend them for as much as you could sell them." William blushed.

"Ay, ay," said Burnet, understanding the feeling, "you will soon get over all that. Your course is clear—you may write as you please—you may shut your eyes—you may fancy you are walking backwards; but on you will go till your head raps against the tombstone."

"What is my course?" cried the invalid—"speak, prophet of evil!"

"Prophet of nonsense!" said Burnet coldly.

"You will not die this bout; you are too young and strong; you are buoyed up with too many hopes; your life is anchored with too many pleasant recollections. No, no, you will not die this bout. You will lend your wardrobe, piece by piece, to the pawnbroker who does not want it, and he in return will lend his money, piece by piece, to you who do. When you are able to go to work again you will in due time release a part of your property;—and thus you will do very well, rich and poor, well and ill clad alternately, for some years more. You will perhaps in the interim get married: your love will turn out a wife; some of your children will die in the measles; you will work much, and eat, if not drink, sparingly:—and thus you will do very well—very well indeed—for some years more."

"And then?" asked William, with a gasp, as Burnet quietly finished his sentence.

"Inquire some time hence," replied the law-writer; "I speak of things as I find them."

When reduced to the brink of despair, and in the act of throwing himself over Blackfriar's-bridge in a fit of insanity, his pocket Bible hurts his breast, as he is straining over the parapet; and on taking it out, he discovers a £50 bank note in the first page, placed there by Mr. Vesper.

We shall not describe his subsequent adventures, or the catastrophe, which is not very skillfully brought about; and the anticipation of it would only mar the reader's interest in the plot, if, as we strongly recommend, he takes the pleasure of reading the book. We confess, too, that we think Helen Howard, the heroine, rather an unaccountably strong-minded and excellent sort of person, much more easily to be met with in a novel than in real life. We beg, however, to recall the attention of our country cousins, to Burnet's notion of a man doing "very well indeed" in London; and to assure them, that we who have "sounded our perilous way," through the heights and depths of society in that metropolis, and looked upon its various phases with a somewhat 'learned spirit of human dealing,' can answer for the verisimilitude of the description. We wish, moreover, to warn the younger branches of excellent families, who love to repair to London with ten pounds and three introductions in their pocket, "to wait till something turns up," that it is not particularly probable they will be followed to town by an elderly gentleman in a brown coat and brown cane, with bushy eye-brows and a long purse, to fold £50 bank notes in their small Bible, the only book they always carry about their person. But we ourselves shall write a leading article all about London very soon. For the rest, they may gain a great deal of curious information, the result of shrewd observation and knowledge of 'life in town,' from Mr. Leitch Ritchie's interesting volumes.